

FAILED HEADLINE EXAMPLE

Many headline fails occur when they don't get reviewed by someone before publication. Deadlines can force writers to speed up their work, but care must be taken to avoid any glaring errors or other kinds of embarrassing results.



These headlines may be considered failures because they provide terribly obvious information, are offensive or inappropriate, or create confusion with the reader.





In 2014, CNN tweeted (<https://twitter.com/CNN/status/430697439012478976>) a link to its story about rape crimes in the United States. To generate interest and tease one of the interesting findings, it used a headline technique that became popular on websites like BuzzFeed or Upworthy: posing a casual question but teasing that the answer “may surprise you”.

CNN tweeted:



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What state has highest rate of rape in the country? It may surprise you.



Change the List: Rape in Alaska

CNN's @jdsutter investigates why Alaska has the highest rate of reported rape in America. #changethelist

cnn.com



What state has highest rate of rape in the country? It may surprise you.

For a major news organization to use this style of trying to get clicks was surprising, and many Twitter users found it disrespectful and in poor taste. CNN used the clickbait approach and focused more on the “surprise” behind the statistics rather than treating the entire issue as a serious one and maintaining that tone in its tweet.